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Ex-chief of CIA would bargain with SDI

By Walter Andrews
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The United States should bargain away the right to deploy a space-based missile-defense system in return for Soviet concessions on their missiles during the nuclear arms talks in Geneva, a former director of the Central Intelligence Agency said yesterday.

Adm. Stansfield Turner said the Soviets have made the canceling or slowing down of the U.S. Space Defense Initiative the "centerpoint" of their negotiating position in Geneva because they want to avoid the cost of a possible race in this area.

"I think they overestimate our own technical prowess, and they may be just a little worried that we might make it here," the former Carter administration CIA director told a press briefing held by the Arms Control Association, a private group.

The United States should continue to pursue research on space defense — the so-called "star wars" program — because it would be too big a risk to allow the Soviets to develop such a system first, he said.

"But, we should bargain away at Geneva right now the right to deploy an SDI to defend ICBMs, the admiral said.

He drew the distinction between an SDI "superdome" defense that could shoot down all incoming missiles and protect the general population and a less-effective one that would be used to defend missile launch silos and add to their deterrence.

"That's what we're going to propose first. That's what the Pentagon is going to ask for — not to go directly to the superdome," Adm. Turner said.

"We're in [such] a marvelous position in Geneva [that] it seems to me [that we ought to be able] to offer up either an SDI for ICBM [defense] or a superdome, and probably be able to get something for nothing in effect," he said.

The former director said he didn't think anyone is ever going to build a

superdome type of SDI space defense system, because as soon as one side saw the other starting to place the components in space, it would knock them down.

Adm. Turner also said there is "no question" that it would be very difficult to draw a clear line between research and development and deployment. "The most clear line is at the end of the laboratory," he said.

The admiral noted that the rationale for the two types of "star wars" defenses was different: The ICBM defense would reinforce the doctrine of deterring a nuclear attack by having the ability to retaliate; a superdome defense would replace that doctrine of Mutual Assured Destruction.

He praised the MAD concept, which he said has kept world peace for the last 40 years, and said that a space-defense system would not be the best way to buttress the MAD doctrine.

The deployment of submarine-launched missiles and bombers,

able to survive and ride out an attack, would be the least expensive way to buttress the balance of mutual retaliation, he said.

The admiral said the Soviet deployment of the new SS-24 and SS-25 mobile missiles seems to be highly desirable. He said it moves the Soviets away from the hair-trigger situation of large missiles in easily-targetable, fixed missile silos, which might be fired if the Soviets mistakenly thought an attack had begun.

The Soviet nuclear forces can't knock out U.S. missiles in a first strike today, the one-time intelligence director said. "There is no window of vulnerability," he said.

With the deployment of the long-range, highly accurate Trident II missile on submarines in 1990, the United States will no longer have to rely on ICBMs to threaten the Soviet land-based missiles, Adm. Turner said.

He suggested that the United States could unilaterally abandon its fixed-base ICBMs, which would in turn place pressure on the Soviets to give up theirs.